

The proposed Broadcast Flag Mandate would allocate to a few corporations a valuable government monopoly to produce and manipulate digital media. This is a vast theft from the American people and I strongly oppose its adoption.

I already see the affects of similar government mandates in the area of book publishing. I own a small company that produces electronic texts distributed over the internet. The Bowker company has a government-granted monopoly to sell and distribute ISBN numbers. Bowker in turn has developed policies that greatly favor large companies over small startups; for example, they sell 10,000 ISBN numbers for \$3,000 (\$.30 per ISBN), while requiring \$800 for 100 ISBN numbers (\$8.00 per ISBN).

Similarly, the Copyright Office of the Library of Congress, which has a government monopoly on copyright registration and assignment of catalog information for the Library of Congress, has a list of priorities for books that it will catalog for its collections. At the top of the list are books published by large publishers, which get their books cataloged through the Catalog in Publication program even before the books are published. Officially, as a small publisher, books I send to the copyright office have the lowest priority for cataloging.

This is relevant because I can compete with large publishers with a computer and free software for designing, typesetting, and distributing digital media in the form of electronic books. If the Broadcast Flag Mandate goes into effect, I will be legally prevented from acquiring or developing hardware and free software to compete with large corporations in other areas of digital media. This would encourage anti-competitive activities and monopolies, while discouraging innovation and free development of new products.